

III. REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-12 and 14-19 are pending in this action. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8 and 14 have been amended, and claims 7, 13 and 20 have been cancelled. The amendments are being made to facilitate early allowance of the presently claimed subject matter. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the objections and rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b) because the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance as discussed below; (b) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration; and (c) places the application in better form for appeal. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment.

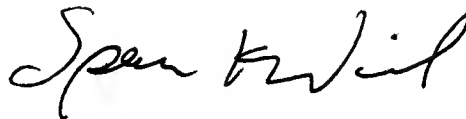
In the Office Action, claims 7, 13 and 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully appreciate this indication.

In the Office Action, claims 1-6, 8-12 and 14-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Choukalos et al. (US 6,425,109). By this Amendment, claims 1, 8 and 14 have been amended to incorporate the allowable features of claims 7, 13 and 20, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the claimed invention.

The dependent claims are believed allowable for the same reasons, as well as for their own additional features.

Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Spencer K. Warnick
Reg. No. 40,398

Date: 12/11/06

(JZ)

Hoffman, Warnick & D'Alessandro LLC
75 State Street, 14th Floor
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 449-0044
(518) 449-0047 (fax)